

## Weekly Bureau of Information for All Who Till the Soil or Are Interested in Making Homes

## AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT

All inquiries and communications addressed to The Times-Dispatch will receive prompt attention. This department will appear each Monday, and contributions or suggestions will be welcomed.

Facts for Farmers, Stock Breeders, Poultry Raisers, Orchardists, Truckers and Gardeners—Queries and Answers

### BRIEF NOTES THOUGHT

#### OUT BY THE WAYSIDE

Nature must inevitably give way sooner or later and it is better that the tired farmer's wife spends an hour in the comfortable easy chair with a good book, which will not only rest the body, but will stir up thought and take her out of the rut of housework, and be perhaps of more benefit than an hour's sleep.

There are thousands of farm homes in every State which could have water under pressure, and acetylene or electric lighting systems if the owners would only take trouble in installing them. The expense is insignificant.

Many a farmer's wife seems to think it highly commendable to see how much work can be accomplished in the twelve hours of the day and then wonder why they grow so old and are unable to keep up with their children.

Few farmers realize the terrible destruction of birds or what has brought it about. He may have observed that while his crops are growing less the absence of birds of all kinds is more noticeable, but he seldom connects the cause.

Geese will make a pretty fair living if they have plenty of grass, although an inch thick, in the early fall, even during the summer months, will do them all the more good.

A writer says: "If all birds were destroyed, it would be many years before crops could be grown because the insects and weeds would increase so rapidly that they would consume every growing thing." Possibly that's an exaggeration, but the birds should be protected all the same.

A professor of dairying in an agricultural college told a class to "thoroughly scald" milk by bringing it to the next day's chief assistant repeated the advice, but he added: "Be sure to rinse out the vessels with cold water first." The assistant was right.

If a few cucumbers get too large for ordinary use before you discover them, pare, slice in cross sections an inch thick, soak in salt water a few hours and make into sweet pickles. They are delicious.

When watering such plants as the purple, delicate, near water, into the crown of the plant, also you will be troubled with crown rot.

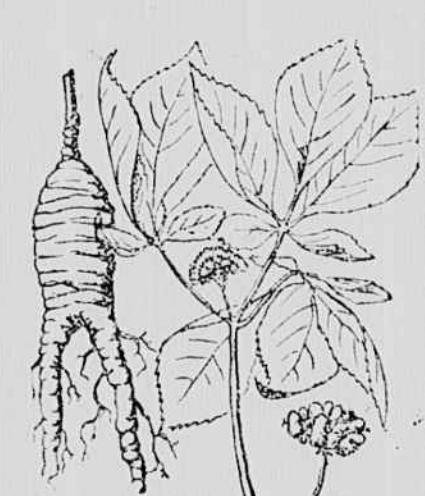
Breathing deeply will stimulate the heart action, lower the circulation, and is an aid to perfect health.

The hedge should be kept properly clipped. Put the clippings on the compost heap. You will have one, and you ought to have one.

### CULTIVATION OF GINSENG

Again inquiries come in as to the cultivation of ginseng. Two or three, maybe a half a dozen people in Virginia have succeeded in cultivating it. Probably three times as many, perhaps, have failed, after expensive effort. To prepare for the business is an expensive proposition and then it is a very long time before the profits come in if they ever do.

As has often been told in The Times-Dispatch, American ginseng grows naturally on the slopes of ravines and in other shady, but well-drained situations in hardwood forests in various abundance from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River, and southward to the mountains of Georgia and the



Branch, Root and Berries of American Ginseng.

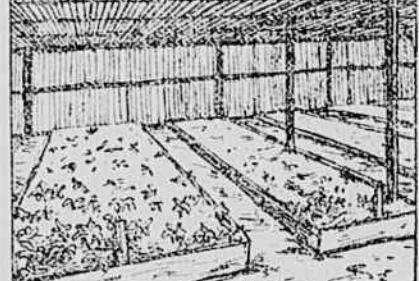
Carolinians. In the mountains of Southwest Virginia and East Tennessee there used to be a large number of ginseng and the woodsman's axe became so numerous, a great deal of it. It has long been valued by the Chinese for medicinal use, though rarely credited with curative value in the United States. The dried roots have been exported from this country in increasing quantities since the early years of the eighteenth century, the price rising as the wild supply diminished because of the clearing away of suitable forests from about 40 cents a pound in the early years of its collection to more than \$6 a pound for the best qualities during the past few years.

The cultivation of native ginseng, stimulated by its increasing scarcity and the rising prices, began in an experimental way about sixteen years ago and has attained such proportions that the output of cultivated roots is little short of that collected from the forests and in the present state of the market has nearly the same value. It is reasonable to assume that the cultivated root must eventually displace the wild article as a commodity for export, but any rapid increase of production at this time might depress selling prices, which are not thought to exceed greatly the cost of growing and marketing, when the slow development of the plants and the relatively expensive equipment needed for ginseng culture are duly considered. A negligible quantity of ginseng root is consumed by Chinese residents of North America and a trifle has been used by the domestic medicinal trade, leaving practically no outlet for this product with the Koreans and Asiatic Chinese.

The cured root is valued by the Chinese largely according to its size and maturity. Young and undersized roots dry hard and puffy, and are not regarded as desirable. Very small roots and root fibers often realize less than \$1 a pound, while those of proper size and quality sell at quotations. Cultivated roots, as a rule, attain greater size than wild ones of the same age, but lack the density of the wild roots. Roots of the third year of development should rarely be dug for market until the sixth year, and should then be taken up solidly and the undersized roots replanted or securely heeled in until time to plant

in the spring. Good roots are nearly four inches long, half an inch in thickness below the crown, and average about an ounce in weight in the fresh state. Roots may be dug at any time after growth ceases in September, but mid-October is regarded as the most favorable time.

As a commercial product it would appear that ginseng is particularly liable to over production, which damps the price.



Large shed affording partial shade.

er, however, is greatly lessened by the slow development of the plant and the inherent difficulties of its cultivation. Under the present condition of production, ginseng offers attractive possibilities to patient cultivators, who are in sympathy with the limitations of growth and the slow development of woodland plants in general, and who are willing to make a material outlay with little return in view for several years to come, but it holds out little inducement for inexperienced growers looking for quick profits from a small investment. The culture of ginseng and of small crops is best done in an inexpensive and experimental manner, enlarging the equipment only as reasonable success is assured. "Funging" in ginseng is likely to prove disastrous, as in other forms of business enterprise.

### FERTILIZATION OF APPLE ORCHARDS

There is an important need for fertility in any orchard that is actively producing and growing. The actual extent of this need can be approximated chemically by determining the average composition of apple wood, leaves, and fruit, and by applying



The unfertilized trees on the left have averaged 186 bushels per acre for four years, while those on the right, differing only in the addition of manure, have averaged 637 bushels.

these figures to what may be considered good annual amounts of these products. The total plant-food draft of a mature and active orchard is greater than the actual production of fruit, and wheat in every important constituent except phosphorus.

It is practically inevitable, therefore, that sooner or later the output will be reduced or in off seasons will be developed in any productive orchard because of a lack of sufficient plant-food. Notwithstanding, the trees are usually able to maintain themselves much better and longer than believed. This is probably because of their much longer season of root activity, their more natural demands, the annual return of most of the plant-food in their leaves, and the actuality of the production of fruit for one or more seasons when conditions become unfavorable. However, it is quite evident that very important amounts of plant-food are annually removed by an apple orchard. Scarcely any soil can furnish all these materials indefinitely in the amounts and times required, and unless proper assistance is rendered there must come a time when production is reduced unless these elements are returned to the soil.

Part of the orchard's product requires comparatively small amounts of the important elements. This is especially true of the wood, even when the annual production of mature trees is considered. This largely accounts for the fact that young trees are much less likely to make a profitable return to fertilizer than older trees, but the older trees are very easily supplied to the annual production of fruit by means of a large plant brush. Applied in this manner it takes but about half a minute to a cow, making the cost of the application but a small matter.

As many as 350 head at a time have been treated with crude cottonseed oil and tar in this manner, using four gallons of the oil and less than two gallons of the tar. The cattle being rendered almost immune from the flies.

The late Professor J. B. Smith reported success from the use of fine tobacco dust in the case of plant lice and wherever it would be fatal to the horn fly if this insect stays long enough to bite the back of an animal when the dust has been scattered. It is also claimed for tobacco dust that it is a good repellent for the stable fly.

Horn flies get their name on account of their habit of clustering at the base of the horns of cattle. They in no way injure the animal, but choose it as a safe resting place when not engaged in biting. These flies lay their eggs in manure freshly deposited by the animals they attack. Must be watched for and the manure of the droppings is collected to the increase of this pest; hence, a wet summer will produce more flies than a very dry summer.

cent ash. Of the ash, practically all but 1 per cent is from the shell. A glance at these organic shows one the importance of a plentiful supply of pure fresh water. Water is not food, but without water food is of no use to the fowl. Animals as well as plants must have the same functions before they can use it. When the food is digested it is taken up by the blood, which circulates through the body, supplying and replenishing it. Next to water, which is the most abundant element found in the largest amount, both in the hen and in the egg. This element builds up the body and repairs the waste tissues. Protein, although the principal nutrient used for tissue building, can also be used to take the place of carbohydrates and fat if these are not sufficiently supplied in the ration. It is a costly element, however, to have this take place, as the protein is more expensive than the carbohydrates or fat.

Carbohydrates, which are principal starches, sugars, organic acids, and pentosans, are used to produce heat and energy. They are the fuel, and are very necessary in the ration, and for the largest part of it. Fats have, to a great extent, the same functions as carbohydrates. Fats act as a storehouse for surplus supplies on which the fowl can draw when necessary. As a nutrient matter, fats are also needed for the bones of the fowls and for the shell of the eggs.

Protein is found more or less in all feeds. Legumes, such as peas and beans, having more than corn and wheat. Cottonseed meal, linseed meal, and beef scrap contain more protein than grains do, and some of these proteins are of a more valuable nature. Carbohydrates form a large part of most grains and grasses. Corn is perhaps the best example among the grains of a carbonaceous feed, containing as it does 70 per cent carbohydrates and 5 per cent of fat. Fat is found more or less in most grains, corn and oats containing more than wheat or barley. Meat meal and beef scrap contain more fat than any other feed. Ash is not found in grains to any large extent, corn having only 1.6 per cent and oats 2 per cent. Wheat bran and middlings have more, the former on an average having nearly 6 per cent and the latter 3.3 per cent.

Some of the animal feeds, such as beef scrap and bone meal, supply larger proportions of ash, and the result of feeding experiments indicate that a large percentage of ash is needed than is supplied by grain and grain products, and that some of the animal feeds which are commonly used for poultry feeding are deficient in ash and are improved by the addition of bone meal. Crushed oyster shells are often recommended to supply lime for poultry, but the results of our experiments indicate that bone meal is a much better source of lime than oyster shells.

The Horn Fly. The horn fly has long been a pest of the farmer. It is a stickler for dark shades. Hence, his attacks are chiefly made on dark cattle. Cattle have been noted in which two cows, one white and the other dark, standing side by side, were enveloped in a swarm of horn flies which attacked only the dark cow, leaving the other entirely free.

It is claimed that the flies can even gauge the thickness of the skin and make discrimination, giving preference to the thin-skinned animals.

Controlling the horn fly on the cattle producing irritation and worry to such an extent as to cause a decrease in the milk flow from one-third to one-half.

Many remedies have, of course, been devised which have been more or



Harvesting Peanuts in Southside Virginia.

less effective and no doubt there are plenty of newly discovered "cures" on the market, but new remedies are not always the best.

The following is a rather old-fashioned remedy, but it has stood the test of time, than which no better recommendation can be given. Crude cottonseed oil or fish oil and lime mixed, about two parts of the former to one of the latter. The two mix readily and are very easily applied to the animal by means of a brush. Applied in this manner it takes but about half a minute to a cow, making the cost of the application but a small matter.

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### GENERAL INFORMATION THROUGH QUESTION BOX

**Keep Out the Flies.**  
To C. M. S. Spotsylvania County. In reply to your lengthy query: Stock in a darkened or screened stable during the day is not troubled by flies. The writer has made a habit of turning his cow into the pasture at night during the hot weather and keeping her housed during the day. Stable windows should be darkened by hanging tarp or other material over them, and the doors should be closed at all stable doors and windows screened.

**Here Matter of Cold.**  
Mrs. N. E. D. Buckingham County. Your letter has been received. If your chickens are permitted to crowd into huddles in a close house on hot nights they will easily catch cold when a cool day comes. Better move the roosts out into the scratching sheds.

**Facts and Figures.**  
R. V. G. Albemarle. The exact figures of the year 1913 are not available, but the Agricultural Department of the government estimates that in addition to the loss of 200,000,000 bushels of grain, the loss on vegetables is \$2,000,000; on fruit, \$7,000,000; and on other crops, enough more to bring the total loss up to \$80,000,000 by insects—all in a single year. Stupendous figures, aren't they?

**Home-Made Chicken Food.**  
To L. W. E. North Carolina. The material part of your question is, "What is the most of these are good enough and the government tries to see to it that they are pure, but they are expensive and I am sure are no better than you can get at home much cheaper. Certainly none can be better than the following, which is recommended by a high authority and which will prove sufficient food for one day for 125 chicks: Barley meal, three pounds; corn meal, six pounds; ground oats, three and one-half pounds; cottonseed meal, one-half pound; potatoes, three and one-half pounds; clover hay, three and one-half pounds.

**Canada Thistle, Probably.**  
Surrey County. I am sending you a sort of thistle plant. Will you kindly say what it is? It is very troublesome and has come recently on our land. The leaves of the plant look very much like the Canada thistle. Better go for it and keep all young tops cut off and never allow a green leaf above ground.

**Bright Tobacco in Lunenburg.**  
To W. T. T. Pittsylvania County. Yes, bright tobacco is grown all over Lunenburg County. True the farmers of that county used to confine themselves to the dark shipping tobacco, but for the last five years they have been growing the brights almost exclusively, and they are making a splendid success. Write to the secretary of the Virginia Growers' Association, Kenbridge, Va., for information.

**Prune the Grapes.**  
If allowed to go unpruned, grapes are likely to be ill-shaped and undeveloped. The principal reason for pruning is to keep the vines from spreading, to keep the fruit from being crowded, and to keep the vines from being killed by frost. Pruning should be done in the fall, after the leaves have fallen, and before the vines begin to grow again.

**Harvesting Peanuts in Southside Virginia.**  
The peanuts are being harvested in Southside Virginia. The crop is generally good, but the weather has been so dry that the peanuts are small and the vines are withering. The farmers are advised to harvest the peanuts as soon as possible, before the vines wither completely.

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**Incubating Alfalfa Fields.**  
Alfalfa fields may be inoculated with soil taken to a depth of four to six inches from an alfalfa or sweet clover field where the plants are well established. The soil should be inoculated at the rate of about 200 pounds per acre. It is well to avoid exposing the soil to the sunlight for any considerable length of time. Part of this soil may be sifted and from ten to twenty pounds mixed thoroughly with the seed for each acre. The seed should be slightly moistened before mixing, and the mixture shoveled over promptly and evenly enough to sow. The fine soil particles and the bacteria cling to the seeds and are ready to begin work as soon as the plants start growth. The remaining soil was not up to the expectations of canal officers, who said that the war is keeping many ships from using the waterway.

**WAR HURTS CANAL TRAFFIC**  
\$85,000 Taken in From Tolls in First Week of Business.  
PANAMA, August 23.—During the first week of business the Panama Canal earned approximately \$85,000, not including the amount collected for advance service and payments made in advance of the tolls. These amounts would bring the total receipts up to almost \$150,000.

### HOLDERS OF GRAIN ADVISED TO DEMAND HIGHER PRICES

**Little Doubt as to Position of Farmers, Who Are Now in Control of Grain Values.**  
CHICAGO, Ill., August 23.—There is little doubt in the minds of the more conservative grain men of the world as to the position of farmers who are now in control of breadstuffs values. While it is true that nearly 100,000,000 bushels of wheat have been sold to go abroad on the present crop, there is at least 175,000,000 bushels more that can be spared to foreigners. Farmers of the country for a time are unlike those of years ago. The industry of today is carried on by men who are well posted as to world conditions and who know the changes in the breadstuffs situation from day to day. No sooner is the news received at Chicago of the price changes and general news from the Old World than the country for a time is unlike those of years ago. The industry of today is carried on by men who are well posted as to world conditions and who know the changes in the breadstuffs situation from day to day. 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